



**Hilton Head Island**  
community church

## **“Words of Life” - Discussion Guide**

Pastor Todd delivered a message on the spiritual gift of encouragement as the conclusion of our series called “Stir It Up” focusing on spiritual gifts from Romans 12. The message featured testimonies from Joanne Cochran and Coleman Peterson, who both demonstrate the gift of encouragement in their lives. Pastor Todd emphasized that encouragement is not just cheering someone up, but coming alongside people in difficult situations to help lift them out of pits, bringing out the best in others, and supporting their motivation. He explained that the Greek word 'parakaleo' means to call out, strengthen, come alongside, or urge forward. The message highlighted that while some have the specific spiritual gift of encouragement, all Christians should practice encouraging one another. Todd used the illustration of someone falling into a pit and needing someone who knows the way out to jump in and help them escape. He referenced Barnabas from the New Testament as an example of someone known for encouragement, and challenged the congregation to be 'good finders' who notice people in need and offer presence, words, and ongoing support. The message concluded with a call to stir up whatever spiritual gifts God has given each person and to actively use the gift of encouragement in their families, workplaces, and community.

### **Intro Prayer**

Heavenly Father, we come before You with grateful hearts as we gather together to study Your Word. We thank You for the gift of encouragement and for those who have demonstrated this gift in our lives. Lord, we ask that You would open our hearts and minds to what You want to teach us today. Help us to be receptive to Your Spirit's leading and to discover how You want to use each of us to encourage others. May our time together strengthen our faith and equip us to be better encouragers in our families, workplaces, and community. We pray this in Jesus' name, Amen.

### **Ice Breaker**

What is one of your favorite Thanksgiving traditions, and why does it bring you joy?

### **Key Verses**

2 Timothy 1:6

Romans 12:8

Hebrews 10:24-25

Acts 4:36

### **Questions**

Pastor Todd mentioned that encouragement helps lift people out of difficult situations. Can you share about a time when someone encouraged you during a challenging period in your life?

The Greek word 'parakaleo' means to come alongside, strengthen, or urge forward. How is this different from just cheering someone up or offering platitudes?



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Joanne shared how God revealed to her that she should write cards and create crafts for nursing home residents. How might God be calling you to use encouragement in a specific way?

Coleman talked about seeing employees as people rather than just workers. How can we apply this principle of truly 'seeing' people in our daily interactions?

The sermon mentioned that Barnabas was known as the 'son of encouragement.' What qualities do you think made him such an effective encourager?

Pastor Todd said encouragers 'bring out the best in others' and help people see what they can become. Who in your life has done this for you, and how did it impact you?

The message emphasized that we need encouragement more in the future than we do today. Why do you think this is true, and how can the church prepare for this?

What are some practical ways we can 'stir up' the gift of encouragement in our own lives and become better at supporting others' motivation?

### **Life Application**

This week, especially during Thanksgiving gatherings, intentionally look for opportunities to encourage someone. Choose one person who might be going through a difficult time and practice the three steps mentioned: see them (notice their need), speak into them (offer encouraging words), and stay present with them (follow up and continue to support them). Consider how you might use your unique gifts and circumstances to be an encourager in your workplace, family, or community.

### **Key Takeaways**

Encouragement is more than cheering someone up - it's coming alongside people to help lift them out of difficult situations

Encouragers bring out the best in others by seeing what others miss and calling people to their potential  
The gift of encouragement involves supporting people's motivation and instilling courage when they want to give up

All Christians should practice encouragement, even if it's not their primary spiritual gift

Effective encouragement involves three steps: seeing people's needs, speaking encouraging words, and staying present with them

### **Ending Prayer**

Lord Jesus, thank You for this time of fellowship and learning about the gift of encouragement. We are grateful for the examples of Joanne and Coleman, and for all the encouragers You have placed in our lives. Help us to be people who see others through Your eyes, who speak life and hope into difficult situations, and who stay present with those who are struggling. As we go into this week of Thanksgiving, may we be intentional about encouraging our family members, friends, and everyone we encounter. Stir up the gifts within each of us, Lord, and use us to make a difference in our community and world. We commit to being good finders who look for opportunities to lift others up. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.